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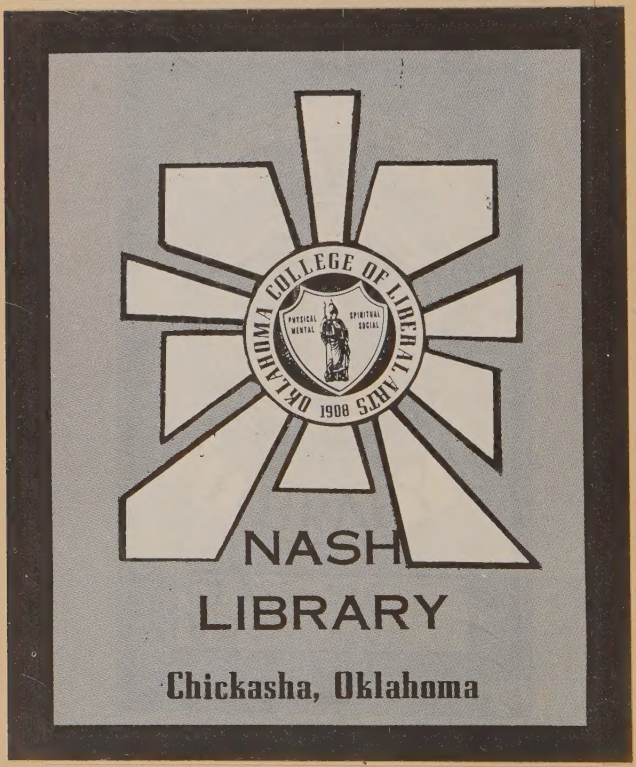

WITHDRAWN

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IMMORTALITY IN POST-KANTIAN IDEALISM

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Immortality in Post-Kantian Idealism

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THE INGERSOLL LECTURESHIP

Extract from the will of Miss Caroline Haskell Ingersoll, who died in Keene, County of Cheshire, New Hampshire, Jan. 26, 1893

First. In carrying out the wishes of my late beloved father, George Goldthwait Ingersoll, as declared by him in his last will and testament, I give and bequeath to Harvard University in Cambridge, Mass., where my late father was graduated, and which he always held in love and honor, the sum of Five thousand dollars ($5,000) as a fund for the establishment of a Lectureship on a plan somewhat similar to that of the Dudleian lecture, that is — one lecture to be delivered each year, on any convenient day between the last day of May and the first day of December, on this subject, "the Immortality of Man," said lecture not to form a part of the usual college course, nor to be delivered by any Professor or Tutor as part of his usual routine of instruction, though any such Professor or Tutor may be appointed to such service. The choice of said lecturer is not to be limited to any one religious denomination, nor to any one profession, but may be that of either clergyman or layman, the appointment to take place at least six months before the delivery of said lecture. . . . The same lecture to be named and known as "the Ingersoll lecture on the Immortality of Man."

IMMORTALITY IN POST-KANTIAN IDEALISM

THE task of reviewing Hegel's *Encyclopädie* was assigned to Herbart. The poor man did his best, but failed to make head or tail out of his Hegel, and then despairingly expressed his mood in the words, "Solches Philosophiren ist als Tatsache vorhanden"; "such philosophizing is an actual fact." [1] To many minds of that day and this, the whole movement of post-Kantian idealism has been a brute mystery, inexplicable and impenetrable. Nevertheless, the idealism of the early nineteenth century has been a fructifying influence in the intellectual history of modern civilization. To investigate that movement is not to inquire into a dead past, but to seek some of the roots

of the living present of our spiritual life; and perchance to rediscover some truths that the present has crowded to one side. The aim of our inquiry is to interpret the beliefs of Fichte, Schelling, Hegel, and Schopenhauer about human immortality, and to consider the significance of those beliefs for modern thought.

The problem of immortality, it may be said at once, has to do solely with the survival of individual personal consciousness. Other conceptions are either not problematic or not concerned with immortality. That a mysterious entity not in consciousness, called soul, may forever exist is not seriously problematic; since Fichte it is almost universally rejected as false. That our lives have consequences in the lives of others after we are dead, through heredity and social influence (as long as others are born on earth), and that

social groups survive the passing of their members — these opinions are trite platitudes. They constitute no problem, and, for one who troubles to consider the predictions of science about the future of this planet, they offer no immortality; they only parry for a moment the annihilation which awaits the human race. Again, there is no reasonable doubt that traces of what we once were will forever be a part of the cosmos. Adonaïs "is made one with nature"; true, O poet! But which do you mean? That

> The One remains, the many change and pass,

or that, truly,

> The soul of Adonaïs, like a star,
> Beacons from the abode where the Eternal are?[2]

Some residue of Adonaïs and of us all will doubtless forever be in the One. But the sting of the problem is felt when

we ask, What of the soul of Adonaïs himself? Does the individual person truly live or truly die?

Every serious thinker must sooner or later answer yes or no to the question in this specific form. Yet for few thinkers, Plato being about the only exception, is this problem a central one.[3]

The solution to the problem at which one arrives does not stand by itself, as some intuitions and axioms seem to do; it is derivative from our *Weltanschauung*, our total view of the world. Our faith in immortality depends on our philosophy.

Albert Schweitzer has recently shown afresh the need for a world view if our civilization is to survive.[4] "For society and for the individual," he says, "life without a *Weltanschauung* is a pathological disturbance of the higher sense of orientation."[5] Now, one's attitude toward immortality is not

reasonably determined so much by this or that particular fact or so-called evidence as by our orientation in the universe. No one fact is as important as the whole structure of facts. The bricks of reality are not significant; it is the way the bricks are put together that counts. Rational faith or unfaith in life after death is a function of one's total cosmic perspective. What of soul and body, mechanism and purpose, time and eternity? These questions can never be answered by microscopes or by levitations. A myopic view of this or that piece of evidence will never interpret man's faith in life after death. Schopenhauer's instinct was sound when he declined to pin any faith in immortality to so-called spiritistic phenomena, giving as his reason "the disgustingly absurd and abjectly stupid world order that results from the communication and conduct of these spirits." [6]

It was one of the merits of post-Kantian idealism to see that all the great truths about the meaning and value of life are parts of a world view, and that every special fact or belief must be interpreted in the perspective of that view.

I

1900–1925 AND 1800–1825

The present year is a suitable one for looking back on the first quarter of the preceding century in contrast with the first quarter of our own. Both were periods of unrest; both, marked by world warfare; both, attended by changes in ancient civilizations and governments; and both, great ages of intellectual creation — although, in philosophy proper, the early eighteen-hundreds were incomparably greater than the early nineteen-hundreds.

The intellectual climates of the two periods were very different; and yet

they had much in common. In both periods there was a revolt against the crass materialism of earlier thought. As idealism rejected the materialistic ideas that found expression in the eighteenth century, so the present rejects the materialism that sprang up after the fall of Hegelianism, although it is friendly to views like behaviorism with materialistic affinities.

In both periods, also, the starting-point and goal of thought is the interpretation of experience. Transcendent things in themselves, above and beyond all possible experience, are no concern of the typical thinker of either period. Herbart's "reals" are the exception that proves the rule. "I hereby publicly declare," said Fichte, "that it is the inmost spirit and soul of my philosophy that man has nothing at all but experience, and he comes to everything that he reaches only by experience, by

life itself."[7] This might as well have been written by any twentieth-century pragmatist, or, save for the last three words, by any realist. Further, both periods were dominated by the idea of evolution. The idealists foreshadowed in speculative thought the conception of evolutionary law, which was to be worked out in empirical detail by later men of science. Schelling and Hegel regarded development as the very law of the Absolute's being; and Schopenhauer taught the struggle for existence. Finally, in both periods there was profound interest in the interpretation of value experience, although in the intervening time the rapid growth of the natural sciences had for a while pushed the study of values into the background, and the twentieth century has not yet attained the rational insight into the significance of values, moral and religious, esthetic and intellectual, that was the secure possession of the idealists.

Whatever similarities may be traced between the two quarter centuries, the difference in intellectual climate between them is much greater than the resemblance. This difference may be brought out by the case of Herbart, who lived among idealists as a stranger in a strange land. A recent historian of philosophy characterizes the system of Herbart as "empiricism, pluralism, realism, and determinism."[8] This description would suffice almost as well for twentieth-century pragmatisms and new realisms as for the nineteenth-century Herbart. But the contrast between the two periods goes further than any divergence of particular doctrine; it has its roots in something deep and general. That fundamental contrast may be expressed by saying that idealism sought unity, while the present seeks precision; or that the age of idealism was a time of faith in metaphysics, while the present is positivistic.

These statements require some amplification. Idealism, we have said, sought unity, while the present seeks precision. Idealism believed that there is rational unity in the universe; that without such unity, thought would be futile. We of the present are dubious about rational unities; we are concerned with observation of empirical facts, for which technical accuracy and precision is the chief requisite. The modern is suspicious of all absolutes. When Schelling's disciple, Oken, calls the Absolute ± 0, the modern cries triumphantly, Thy speech bewrayeth thee! Zero is, indeed, the meaning and the value of the famous Absolute!

The idealistic interest in unity was, however, no mere abstraction; it was a confidence in reason. But a certain distrust of reason pervades the atmosphere of the present. Hegel believed that he could show that there

was reason even in the irrational.[9] Today one finds a tendency to discover unreason even in the rational. Hegel saw the cunning of reason in "that it sets the passions to work for itself." [10] Modern psychoanalysis sees reason at work for the passions and desires of the subconscious, and hardly dares pretend to the use of reason, lest it fall into rationalization.

With all its confidence in reason, Hegelianism fell; and Weber is probably right in holding that what discredited it was "its presumptuous attempt to withdraw the hypotheses of metaphysics from the supreme jurisdiction of facts." [11] Yet its fall carried with it good and evil in like destruction. Reason commanded the idealist to include in his vision of the universe the whole range of his experience, all facts and all values. Since the collapse of idealism, there has been an increasing

tendency toward specialization and division of intellectual labor, which makes the interpretation of the value of life as a whole more and more difficult. Specialization often breeds intolerance of values, and even of facts that lie beyond the restricted field of the specialist. Thus the modern gain in precision has been purchased at the price of a loss in unity.

There is another way of stating this contrast between the two periods. It may be said, namely, that while the idealists had a profound faith in metaphysics, the present is inclined toward positivism. Men who believe in rational unity strive for and have faith in a vision of the meaning of reality as a whole; that is, they are metaphysical. Men whose minds are meticulous rather than comprehensive are inclined to positivism. It is not quite true that the thought of the present is avowed and

consistent positivism, yet it is true that many characteristic philosophies of the present are positivistic in temper. Philosophies of "as if," behaviorism, views that seek in adjustment to environment the panacea for all our ills, realisms that confine the task of thought to analysis of the given, have a common logical affiliation with positivism, whatever the system-makers may avow. The development of positive science, sociological and psychoanalytic flank attacks on all metaphysical beliefs (especially on religious beliefs), and the intense interest in the history of ideas and institutions, coupled with skeptical indifference to their truth or validity, are all symptoms of current positivism. For a season, the human mind seems to have forgotten that precision without unity will not lead to truth about an interacting universe; and that the most subtle analysis of the given will

never carry thought beyond the given unless or until reason sets the results of analysis into relation with a view of the whole.

Surveying the two periods in review, we may say that the points in which they resemble each other are, on the whole, friendly to faith in immortality. A universe in which materialism is false, conscious experience is valid, development is a fundamental law, and there are values, is a universe which, thus far, seems to invite immortality. If it be also a universe of metaphysical unity, the basis for faith seems to be more substantial; but if it be a universe in which knowledge is restricted to precise information about phenomena, while man remains ignorant of any meaning in reality as a whole, its climate is too bleak for belief in endless life to thrive therein. Only hardy forms of faith can survive. The change, we perceive, has

been unfavorable to personal immortality.

Whether the change has been wholly for the better intellectually is doubtful. On this point we may well suspend judgment until we have inquired more closely into certain characteristic conclusions of the idealistic movement. Let us consider what idealism had to say about the metaphysics of logic, of value, and of personality, in order to interpret the place of immortality in the idealistic world view.

II

The Idealistic Metaphysic of Logic

To the casual observer, the study of logic might not seem to have much to do with faith in eternal life. Not a few believers have defended their confidence that immortality is true by a deliberate appeal to what they regard as

a higher court; an appeal to the heart which knows more than the head, to the instinct which is wiser than reason, or to the life which (as Lotze and James and Bowne believed) is more than logic. Not so the early nineteenth-century idealists. Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel did not look on logic as a purely formal science in the Aristotelian sense; but they regarded it as the body of principles of true thinking about reality, and hence as revealing the necessary structure of reality itself. As we must think about reality, so the reality must be; the rational is the real, and the real is the rational. For Hegel, therefore, a system of logic is a system of metaphysics. Logic was for him no set of schoolmen's rules to be applied to any content irrespective of its truth; but rather it was the actual set of principles by which the spirit moves toward a rational mastery and possession of its

world. Logic is thus nothing apart from life, but is the very heart and soul of life.

The importance of logic for idealistic metaphysics may be better understood if we recall Hegel's distinction between *Verstand* and *Vernunft* (understanding and reason). The *Verstand* is what Hegel calls the abstract exercise of thought; it separates, defines, makes distinctions. The *Vernunft* is concrete thinking; it unites, brings together, grasps the object as a whole. The *Verstand* is analytic; the *Vernunft* is synoptic. Both kinds of thinking are necessary. The work of the reason can be completed only after the work of the understanding has been done; but Hegel is convinced that reason is higher and truer than understanding as an interpreter of reality.

This distinction of Hegel's has far-reaching implications. If the under-

standing is the guide to truth, then analytic method is the sole tool of science and philosophy; and if analytic method is the only sound method, the only sound metaphysic must be some form of atomism. Reality must be a collection of simple entities that cannot be further analyzed. Herbart, Hegel's great opponent, was a partisan of the understanding, and arrived at the inevitable atomism — a universe made up of many simple, unchangeable reals. The same logical necessity is illustrated in twentieth-century analytic neo-realism, which arrives at an atomism of neutral entities.

On the other hand, if Hegel be right, and reason is the guide to truth, then the ultimate method of thought is not analytic, but synoptic.[12] Analysis is necessary but it is not sufficient. It must be supplemented by a grasp of the object as a whole if that object is ever

to be understood. The most instructive discussion of the subject in the past twenty-five years, Professor Spaulding's "Defense of Analysis," admits that there are organic wholes which cannot be explained in terms of the parts; and this fact he calls "a non-rational element in nature." [13] What Hegel regards as the very heart of true reason, the partisan of analytic understanding regards as a baffling mystery. The analytic method reaches its goal when it finds atoms. The synoptic method reaches its goal only when it finds an organism of some sort, a genuine whole to which the atoms belong and from which they derive their meaning. The understanding explains the whole in terms of the parts; the reason explains the parts in terms of the whole.

The human intellect is tossed back and forth from atoms to organisms and

from organisms to atoms. Materialism and much new realism in philosophy, associationism and all structuralism in psychology, and extreme individualism in social and economic theory, are all atomistic. Teleological philosophies, functional psychology and self-psychology, biological vitalism, theories which regard social process as genuinely co-operative and creative,[14] are all organic.

In this clash idealism has a profound interest. It does not reject the atomistic in favor of the organic view; but it regards the organic as the truer, because it can include the truth of atomism, while atomism cannot do justice by uniquely organic properties and laws. Idealism perceives that the capacity to understand either what Schelling calls "the universal organism," [15] or any particular organism, is contingent on one's logical method. "Ordinarily," says Fichte, "one thinks

of being as something static, rigid, and dead, the very philosophers, almost without exception, have so conceived it, even when they described it as absolute. This arises wholly from the fact that men have had no living concept, but only a dead one, for thinking about being. The death is not to be found in being in and for itself, but rather in the killing gaze of the dead observer." [16] The pre-Bergsonian Fichte saw clearly that tools fit only for dissection can never discover the secret of life. This insight, deepened and intensified by Hegel, is one of the most characteristic contributions of the idealistic movement.

Here, it would seem, philosophy had taken a genuine onward step. But the progress of thought is rarely rectilinear; and the discoverers of truth often imperil their discovery by their own errors of judgment. Fichte and Hegel chose

to express their deepest insights in exceedingly obscure language; the earthen vessels that contained the treasure caused Schopenhauer to describe Fichte's "Wissenschaftslehre" as "the most senseless, and consequently the most wearisome book that was ever written," [17] and many contemporaries (like Herbart) to complain about "the great difficulty of the correct understanding" of Hegel.[18] There is also something almost petulant in the self-assurance of those writers. Fichte was certain that "there is only one philosophy just as there is only one mathematics"; [19] and he did not doubt whose philosophy it was.

Philosophers whose chief mission it is to set facts in perspective often fail to see their own opinions in their true cosmic insignificance. Without the ironic humor that enables one to smile at his own earnestness even while he is most

genuinely earnest, there is danger that faith may turn into dogmatism, philosophy into opinionated intolerance. The idealists came near to this danger.

But much more important than these annoying formal defects is the fact that the idealists, by their apparent indifference to empirical facts and to precise analyses, laid themselves open to just such attacks as were directed against them by the careful and serious Herbart. He felt that in Hegelianism everything was in confusion, nothing fixed. His analytic mind desired a logic that deals with "something given and definite." [20] Further, he felt that the dialectic triad of the idealists was a form of intellectual bondage,[18] and he proposed to free philosophy from the chains of idealistic systems. He did not realize that his attack was on the form rather than the substance of idealism; nor that his own bondage to

analytic method chained him to a system of "reals" which were only scholastic abstractions and no concrete reality at all. He did, it is true, suspect that his method did not lend itself very well to thought about God,[21] but he did not follow out the clew that this consideration furnished him. Herbart's failure to understand the logic of idealism was an example emulated by the predominant tendency of the post-Hegelian period.

Now, this battle over organic *versus* atomistic logic is one of the decisive battles in the campaign for the interpretation of man's belief in immortality. If merely analytic atomistic logic be the mind's best instrument for attaining truth, the belief in immortality will probably be analyzed away. The conscious person will be dissipated into associated sensations or chain reflexes; the universe will be an aggregate of atoms; there will be no unified mean-

ing of the whole of life and no plan or goal for immortality. Thus the immortal person will evaporate into his constituent atoms, and any question about his destiny becomes an impertinence. If, on the other hand, synoptic or organic logic be the instrument of true thought, then the complex personal life of man may be a true unity; and the cosmos may be an organism with infinite functions which set a career for an immortal soul and provide for it a home. For organic logic, immortality is at least possible, even probable; for atomism, nothing is immortal but the atoms, and even their immortality it is impossible to understand.

It may be that the idealists went too far in thus deducing metaphysics from logic; but they were sound in their insight that an atomistic logic can never interpret an organic reality, and that an organic logic may be tested by its capacity to interpret experience.

III

The Idealistic Metaphysic of Value

The relation between immortality and logic may seem somewhat less than obvious; but no one can fail to perceive at once that there is an intimate bond between a man's theory of value and his attitude toward the destiny of the human person. When one has answered the questions about the true nature of value and its place in the universe as a whole, if one is thorough, one has already stated one's solution of the problem of immortality. Is value real and permanent in the universe, or is it a passing phase of cosmic evolution? What is the value of conscious selves? Because post-Kantian idealism was concerned with such questions, it was bound to arrive at a judgment about the life after death.

Nineteenth- and twentieth-century philosophers are, we have found, alike in their recognition that philosophy begins and ends in the interpretation of experience. But what is experience? How much does it include? The idealists were remarkable, not only for their broad recognition of all kinds of experience, but also for the range and depth of their experiences of value.[22] Kant had shown profound interest in the values of the good, the beautiful, and the holy, as well as the true; but his interest was bounded by certain limitations. His conception of the true was limited by his distrust of organic logic (although he knew, as did Hume, that mere analysis yields no metaphysical knowledge), and also by his disproportionate interest in the world of physical nature revealed to us by the senses. His formalistic ethics reflected only one aspect of the meaning of moral

value. The third "Critique" showed an increasing appreciation of the beautiful and the sublime; yet his own experience of beauty in art or nature was relatively meagre. Throughout his life, Kant was interested in religion, and yet he seems never to have found any unique value in religion in addition to the content of the moral law.

Kant, it is true, probably never did justice to his full theory of value by his own putting of it. His almost naïve defense of immortality, for example, meant more than it said. It spoke only of a postulate. It meant the dignity of personality and value as clews to reality. But Kant did not develop fully his own implications.

The idealistic movement enlarged Kant's conception of experience and deepened the interpretation of values. To restrict experience to sense experience seemed absurd to Fichte. "The

first, lowest, most superficial and most confused way of taking the world," says he, "is that of holding as the world and true existence what meets our outer senses." [23] The world of sense belongs to the lowest order of being; the holy, the good, and the beautiful, to the highest.[24] Nor could Hegel conceive of "sensuous immediacy" as the true life of the soul.[25] His "Philosophy of the Spirit" begins with the natural soul of the subjective spirit; rises to the objective spirit with its social realization of the good in *Recht*, *Moralität*, and *Sittlichkeit;* and culminates in the Absolute Spirit, in which philosophy appears as synthesis of art and revealed religion.[26] The Absolute, then, is value; and morality, beauty, and religion are the very life of the Absolute Spirit.

This acknowledgment of the objectivity of our value experience has obvious implications for belief in immortal-

ity. If the realm of sense experience were the whole of knowable reality, as some professional empiricists seem to believe, there would be no ground for supposing life after death. But if value experiences give us truth about the structure of the universe, then the human spirit may have its eternal place in the value of the Absolute Spirit. It should be noted, also, that sense experience lends itself more readily to the methods of atomistic logic, while values, being true wholes, can be understood only by what we have called organic logic.

Two instances will show how fully the idealists were conscious of the larger implications of their theory of value.

Fichte, for example, based his philosophy on moral experience, carrying out to the end the implications of the Kantian primacy of the practical reason. Ultimately, he held, the only reason for

believing in other persons and an external world is an ethical one. Duty is the one reality on which all else depends. The world is the material of our duty made visible to the senses. God, himself, is the moral order. Moral value, then, is for him the key to reality.

This confidence in moral value led Fichte to an eloquent defense of immortality, which stands in marked contrast to the dry and formal expressions of Kant. The moral law, he argues, must be valid, and its validity means that there must be a rational end for duty. But the highest earthly goal is not such a rational end; "the moral law within us would be void and superfluous, and absolutely unfitted to a being destined to nothing higher than this." Hence, there must be a supersensual world whose purposes morality promotes. It is true that Fichte does not conceive this heaven as lying merely

beyond the grave; it is now present, even now we may participate in it. Because it is eternal, we are.[27]

It may be instructive to take our other illustration from the opposed extreme of the idealistic camp, namely from Schopenhauer. We do not usually think of Schopenhauer as an interpreter of objective and eternal value in which man may participate. On the contrary, he is the cynical pessimist, who denies all value to life and says that God must have been tormented by a devil to create a world like this; but there is, of course, no God. Dante, he observes, found plenty of material on earth for a proper hell, not for a heaven. The World Will is utterly aimless. Life is a wearisome swing of the pendulum from pain to ennui, from ennui to pain. His famous theory of love holds that there is love in order that the next generation may be pre-

served; it never occurs to him that there are next generations in order that love may be preserved. All gold turns to dross in his hands.

And yet this side is not the whole Schopenhauer, although it is the better-known one. The other side stands in startling contrast to this. The world is utterly evil, says Schopenhauer; but, he adds, salvation is possible. With Buddhism he holds that self-will is the root of all evil; and that this root may be destroyed temporarily by objective contemplation of beauty, and permanently by ascetic self-denial and renunciation of existence. Face to face with pure beauty, "it is all one whether we see the sun set from the prison or the palace; we are one with the world and therefore not oppressed, but exalted by its immensity." But man has not the strength long to sustain such contemplations. Only by the way of utter self-

renunciation, the very renunciation of existence, is complete salvation attainable. For the true ascetic, which Schopenhauer admits he was not, "the inner nature itself is abolished." This sounds like utter annihilation; yet Schopenhauer teaches that our true being is indestructible and that "if a single real existence were annihilated, the whole world would necessarily perish with it"; and still the world survives! Further, the state of the saved is described as "filled with inward joy and the true peace of heaven," "peace that cannot be shaken, a deep rest and inward serenity." Listen to the pessimist! "It is the refined silver of the denial of the will to live that suddenly comes forth from the purifying flame of suffering. It is salvation. All suffering has potentially a sanctifying power." [28]

It cannot be said that Schopenhauer arrives at a satisfactory theory of value

or of immortality. He oscillates between pessimism and a doctrine of redemption; between the indestructibility of my real being and its annihilation; between my denial of the world and my inalienable membership in it. Yet it is not to be forgotten that a great mind which set out to deny the permanence of value was forced by a consideration of the facts of spiritual life into an acknowledgment that there is a "final goal," and that "the meaning and end of life is not intellectual but moral." [29]

Here is no doctrine of personal immortality; but the materials therefor lie at hand.

The aged Schopenhauer who could write the lines that follow was no mere pessimist.

Aweary stand I at my journey's goal,
My tired brow can scarce its laurels bear, —
And yet my life brings gladness to my soul;
Tho' others mocked, I have been stedfast e'er.[30]

Such a man was intensely conscious of the value of individual existence.

The idealists made other and more significant contributions to theory of value than those we have mentioned, but we shall pass them by. A certain unreality attaches to all discussion of value apart from personality. Value is an abstraction, a mere essence, apart from its existence in personality; and no metaphysic of value is complete without a metaphysic of personality. It is around the interpretation of personality that the battle for and against immortality rages; and the interpretation of personality is perhaps the chief interest of idealism.

IV

The Idealistic Metaphysic of Personality

We have found that the logic of idealism was organic rather than atomistic, and

that it recognized value as an objective aspect of our experienced world. Both of these conclusions are friendly to faith in immortality, yet neither demands it. The question remains whether Fichte and Hegel still live, not merely in the histories of philosophy and in the knowledge of the Absolute, but as immortal individuals.

Many thinkers believe that personal immortality is incompatible with the very logic of idealism. The Absolute, these critics hold, surveys the birth, bloom, decay, and death of worlds, societies, and individuals. The Many are swallowed up in the One. Only the Absolute survives.[31]

On the contrary, idealism is an assertion of the significance of the finite self. So true is this that a Santayana (in war-time, it is true) could describe German philosophy as egoism. This description is, of course, a caricature;

no philosophy was ever less egoistic, more insistent on subordinating the ego to the whole of which it is a member, than was idealism. Nevertheless it is true that idealism is based on a recognition of the meaning and value of individual personality. The ego is a subordinate member of the Absolute; yet even for Schopenhauer the ego is also the only clew to the Absolute. Personality is the highest expression of the Absolute for Schelling and Hegel at times when they still hesitate to call the Absolute itself a spirit.[32] Now, if so fundamental a place be found for personality at every stage of idealistic thought, the possibility of personal immortality is open.

One great difficulty in any discussion of our theme is the fact that most historians of our period have not paid sufficient heed to their sources, but have either ignored the bearing of the

systems on immortality or have deduced from their interpretations of the systems what the philosophers should have believed. It is sounder historical method, and probably more edifying, to consider what the giants of those days thought for themselves.

Schelling, that strange Proteus figure, had at first little interest in the problem of the value of personality, but was a philosopher of nature.[33] In his later phase, which was without influence on the development of philosophy, he was a believer in life after death. His "proofs" need not concern us here. The belief is not wholly a product of Schelling's last period; traces of it may be found in the earlier "Philosophie und Religion" (1804) and in the dialogue "Clara." Schelling showed his loyalty to organic rather than atomistic logic by rejecting the traditional proof of immortality based on the supposed sim-

plicity and consequent indestructibility of the soul; for, said he, "the soul is no simple thing, but a whole." Finally, Schelling's position is instructive because, even in his later period, he remained pantheistic. He, at least, holds that absolutism is not incompatible with personal immortality.[34]

Schleiermacher should not be omitted from our study. The great philosophical theologian has, however, only negative or vague ideas on the life after death. For him the feeling of dependence on God was the heart of religion, a doctrine which led Hegel to the famous comment that "for Schleiermacher, the dog would be the best Christian."[35] Schleiermacher regarded the ordinary belief in personal immortality as selfish. In the "Reden," he teaches that the goal of religion is to live an eternal life here and now, and to lose one's self in the infinite, rather than to seek personal survival.

Even in the later, more theological, phase of the "Glaubenslehre," he dwells chiefly on the difficulties of belief in immortality. Individual immortality must be bodily; yet how can the celestial body resemble the terrestrial? How can the demand for the perfection of the separate individual be reconciled with the social demand for the perfection of the Church? Is perfection immediate or a development? His last word on the subject is "immer ungewiss" — "forever uncertain." [36]

Fichte stands in marked contrast to Schleiermacher. For him, the philosophical interpretation of belief in immortality was a life-long interest. He expressed in 1790 his gratitude to Kant for peace in this life and for hope of another.[37] At different stages of his thought he develops three main arguments for immortality.

His first argument, formulated in the

"Wissenschaftslehre," may be called the argument from the infinity of the self. The I always posits a not-I as a limit, but this limit can be indefinitely extended. "The self," he says, "can extend the object of its striving to infinity." There is literally no end to the possibilities of the development of selfhood; its infinite development can never be completed — and this fact is "the seal of its vocation for eternity."[38]

Fichte's second argument is a form of the moral argument, which is worked out most fully in "The Vocation of Man" (1800), in briefer form in lectures, probably from 1795, which were discovered and published by Bergman a few years ago. The moral law is for Fichte the one fundamental certainty on which all else is based. Now the moral law commands endless activity for good; and the present state of humanity can therefore not be its final

vocation. Here and now, amid the changes of time, man may be immortal by the resolution to obey the laws of reason; but this immortality is more than a noble quality of life. It is an abiding existence, "borne onwards, pure and inviolate, upon the waves of time."[39] The "abiding existence" is no soul-substance, it is true; on the other hand, it is no mere impersonal quality, but is the survival of the identity of our consciousness, as he puts it in the lectures of 1795. This belief is not demanded by the man whose needs are merely worldly; only the moral man conceives (or needs) eternity. For him, immortality is the activity of the identical conscious ego. He believes in it for no selfish reason, but in order to have a field for the development of holiness.[40] The invisible and eternal world is "the union and direct reciprocal act of many separate and independent wills." [41]

Fichte's third argument may be called the mystical, and is to be found in the beautiful lectures on "The Way to a Blessed Life" (1806). In these lectures, the individual person seems to be merged in God. The experience to which Fichte appeals is still called morality, but instead of the assertion of the moral will, it is the denial of self and the sinking into God which is the ground in experience of his faith in life after death. "Not man but God acts."

This has been called a Spinozistic pantheism, in which the individual disappears. But such is not the intent of Fichte. In these same lectures is one of his most explicit affirmations of personal immortality. "This diremption into a system . . . of egos or individuals is a part of the . . . diremption of the objective world in the form of infinity, and thus belongs to the absolute fundamental form of existence

which is not to be annulled even by deity itself. As being was divided within deity, so it remains divided into all eternity. Hence nothing posited by this diremption, no really developed individual, can ever perish." [42] The mystical argument, then, assures Fichte of the eternal place of every individual in the life of God. In the light of these passages, there can remain no doubt about Fichte's position.[43]

Hegel's metaphysic of the person and his immortality is more difficult to interpret than is Fichte's and there is correspondingly more difference among his expositors. The right-wing Hegelians believed that Hegel held to a personal God and personal immortality, while the left-wing group denied both. There is similar divergence in the judgment of modern commentators.[44] The majority hold that Hegel denies personal immortality.[45] Galloway has recently re-

affirmed this opinion, on the ground that the very logic of absolutism precludes the survival of the self.[46] The self is transcended, lost, annulled, absorbed in the organic whole; the individual does not survive as a separate atom or soul-substance.

Further, it has been said that Hegel was indifferent to the whole problem. So competent an Hegelian and so earnest a believer in immortality as J. M. E. M'Taggart held to this view, and Windelband judged that Hegel had no direct interest in the questions of the personality of God and immortality.[47]

In confirmation of Hegel's supposed indifference to the question, his letter to Heinrich Beer on the death of the latter's son is often quoted.[48] Hegel in this letter said that he did not write "to give you words of comfort, for I should not know how to express any just at this moment that could find room in

your grief that is so immediate and so fresh." After referring to the happy memory of the child's life, he goes on to say that "this is a moment of your life and its hard experience in which your kind and loving nature, which is of the utmost value in the ordinary peaceful current of life, now has to prove the inner strength of a still deeper foundation, in order to show the capacity of the spirit to endure even such an experience as yours." This expression has been used, as we remarked, to show that Hegel did not believe in immortality. The letter does not, it is true, try to force the sorrowing parent's emotions, or to preach to him, or to argue; yet in tactful sympathy it hints at a "still deeper foundation," which may as well lie in faith as in doubt. On this letter, no conclusion can be built.

Over against the majority of the commentators, a smaller group has

held that Hegel made personality his highest category, the completion and crown of the dialectic, and that the Absolute Spirit implies immortal beings as aspects necessary to his own inner life.[49]

It is instructive to turn from the commentators to the writings of the Hegel who is supposed to be indifferent to personality and its survival. This procedure raises a question about whether the commentators have actually taken Hegel's direct discussions of the subject into account. "With the idea of immortality," he says, "the value of life increases." In the religious experience, man, "knowing himself in God, . . . at the same time knows his imperishable life in God, and therefore the idea of the immortality of the soul here enters as an essential moment into the history of religion. . . . The ideas of God and immortality have a necessary relation

to each other; when a man knows truly about God, he knows truly about himself too."

Hegel specifically asserts that "reasoned knowledge, thought, is the root of [man's] life, of his immortality as a totality in himself. The animal soul is sunk in the life of the body, while spirit, on the other hand, is a totality in itself." That is, the Absolute totality comprises man's immortality as a personal totality in himself.

Religions which fail to do justice by the immortality of self-conscious spirit, he censures. Judaism, with its interest in One Lord, but no conception of immortality, is (in Hegel's sense) abstract. "The conscious perception of the unity of the soul with the Absolute, or of the reception of the soul into the bosom of the Absolute, has not yet arisen."

The doctrine of Nirvana, which corresponds to what many regard as the

Hegelian teaching, he confutes on the ground that Nirvana is "not an affirmative permanent duration, but . . . continuous existence in the state of annihilation of the Affirmative. This identity, this union with Brāhma, is, at the same time, a melting away into this unity, which is, it is true, seemingly affirmative, and yet is in itself utterly devoid of determination and without differentiation. . . . This determination of that subjectivity which is objective, which pertains to the objective, namely, to God, is also the determination of the subjective consciousness. This consciousness knows itself as subject, as totality, true independent existence, and consequently as immortal. With this knowledge, the higher destiny of man dawned upon consciousness." It is hard to see how a writer could more explicitly show the logical necessity of immortality on Hegelian premises.

Again, in the interpretation of Christianity, which he regards as absolute religion, he says that "the soul, the individual soul, has an infinite and eternal quality, namely, that of being a citizen in the Kingdom of God." [50]

Again, he defines the idea of immortality as "the idea of the eternal nature of the subjective, individual spirit." He shows that this idea cannot arise at the abstract stages of nature religion or of the religion of the One; it can arise only when self-consciousness is spiritual.[51]

The current opinion that Hegel denies personal immortality appears, therefore, to be untrue not alone to his abundant specific assertions, but also, it may be added, to his organic logic. The view that the Absolute swallows up all distinctions and absorbs all finite persons is, for true Hegelianism, as abstract and untrue as is the opposite extreme of an atomistic personal plural-

ism. This we found in his critique of Judaism and of Hinduism. The Absolute includes all consciousness; all spirits, then, are members of the One Spirit. Metaphysical logic, Hegel teaches, proves personal immortality. Any category short of inclusive Spirit is inadequate. The real is the personal. Such seems to be the main intent of Hegel's thought, despite apparent deviations and obscurities. The popular misunderstanding can have arisen only by overestimating the formal outlines of the Absolute, the goal of the dialectic, while forgetting what for Hegel was the main thing, namely, its concrete spiritual life. No better evidence than this could be found for our thesis that the organic logic of idealism is the only fruitful instrument for the interpretation of personality.

Schopenhauer, the last survivor of the idealists, seems as clearly to deny

personal immortality as Fichte and Hegel to affirm it. The World Will is one; its forms are many, but they pass. Only the Will endures. "Personality," he says explicitly, "is a phenomenon which is known to us only from our animal nature and hence is not longer clearly thinkable when separated from it." [52]

In the essay on "Death," Schopenhauer makes plain that he believes that the personal individuality perishes in the article of death, and that the individual, who is one with the World Will, may willingly give up this individuality because he knows that the Will is the source of innumerable individuals. The good man neither needs nor desires the continuance of his person.[53]

In the brief dialogue on immortality he asserts that the individual ends with death; that individuality is not man's true essence, but rather a restriction or imperfection.[54]

The doctrine of Nirvana, rejected for its abstractness by Hegel, is espoused by Schopenhauer. Yet precisely at this point, one is surprised, as in his metaphysics of value, to find emerging traces of a positive recognition of eternal meaning in personality. Not only does Schopenhauer repeatedly assert the indestructibility of the Will which is our essential being,[55] but in the exposition of Nirvana he hints that there may be some eternal destiny for which we lack definite concepts. "In the hour of death it is decided whether the man returns into the womb of nature or belongs no more to nature, but — for this opposite we lack image, conception, and word, just because these are all taken from the objectification of the will . . . and consequently can in no way express the absolute opposite of it, which accordingly remains for us a mere negation."

What is won in the salvation of Nirvana is denoted by nothing, yet a relative, not an absolute nothing. Elsewhere he describes it as "the flower which proceeds from the constant victory over the will." [56] Here it seems to be more specifically a spiritual quality, a personal experience.

Another current of thought in Schopenhauer, also inconsistent with the general trend of his impersonalistic pessimism, is the doctrine that every individual man is a Platonic idea, and hence that human individuality has a meaning and value that does not attach to other natural phenomena. Individuality, he points out, is at its highest in man, and is less and less in the lower forms of life. Every man is to a certain extent a "special Idea," whereas among brutes only the species has any special significance. Further, he holds, "the intelligible character," that is, the meta-

physical reality, "coincides with the Idea." [57] The special significance of individuals is thus deduced from the Idea in a fashion startlingly like that of Hegel.

It is a matter of no small moment for rational faith in immortality that Schopenhauer set out, as we have seen, to deny both the value of life and the meaning of individual personality; but that, while intending to hold to his negations, he came upon facts which extorted from his unwilling lips the admission that value is to be found in life and that personality is of unique significance.

V

Conclusions

Our conclusion is, then, that post-Kantian idealism as a whole is much more favorable to belief in personal immortality than is commonly supposed. This attitude is no relic of tradition or

surrender to desire, but is the outgrowth of a logical principle.

As we have seen, one's attitude toward immortality is fundamentally determined by one's world view and not by this or that particular fact; and the kind of world view one will adopt is largely determined by one's type of logic. Idealism is based on the logic of the concrete universal, the conception of truth (and hence of reality) as an organic whole. It therefore rejects both all exclusively atomistic and analytic logic and also (as the study of Hegel shows) every attempt to express truth in merely abstract universals like the One.

Hence, in theory of value, idealism is opposed to any pluralistic attempt to find value only in specific situations or specific relations or adjustments of the individual to his environment. Such theories either make value a passing biological incident in the universe, and

so destroy any ground for personal immortality; or else they make value centre and terminate in the interest of the individual, and thus provide, at best, for an atomistic and self-centred immortality — a belief which a recent neo-Hegelian writer rightly describes as irreligious.[58]

Idealism is equally opposed to the abstract idea that only the whole is of value and that individuals are lost and absorbed in that whole. Such a view deprives the whole of all concrete spiritual meaning. If the whole is to have value, as idealistic logic demands, individuals find their value too by their actual eternal membership in that whole.

The fruitfulness of the organic logic of idealism was also shown by its metaphysic of personality. An exclusively analytic logic will explain personality in terms of its parts, whether they be Humean impressions, or more modern

behavior segments, or realistic neutral entities. Such logic forbids the thinker to look for any real and permanent whole, and thus vetoes immortality in advance. The partisan of the merely abstract universal, on the other hand, will make personality only an adjective of the universe as a whole, with no true individuality or inner totality. But the organic logic of idealism shows that human personality is an organism within the universal organism, a whole within the whole, essential to the meaning and content of the whole. If not all idealists have seen this implication of their own thinking, and if those who have seen it have at times appeared to forget it, the implication is nevertheless there.

Idealism takes thinking seriously. Fichte seems to have prophesied against modern pragmatism when he attacked those who hold that "their person does not exist as a particular expression of

reason, but reason exists to help their person through the world." [59] It comes to this: if reason, as idealism understands it, is trustworthy, then immortality is a fact. If value is to be found in experience, even when experience is taken as cynically as it is by Schopenhauer, and if personality is a spiritual whole that finds value through its own membership in the universal order which includes but transcends all human persons, there is substantial ground for reasonable hope of immortal life.

Be that as it may, the case for immortality must rest on its coherence with the world view to which reason leads us. The seeker for truth about immortality in an age of philosophic confusion may take comfort from the optimistic words of the great pessimist, Schopenhauer: "The power of truth is incredibly great and of unspeakable endurance." [60]

NOTES

[All translations in the text of the lecture are by the writer unless an English translation is explicitly referred to in these notes.]

1. Herbart, *Kleinere philosophische Schriften . . .* iii (Leipzig: Brockhaus, 1843), 721.

2. P. B. Shelley, *Works*. Globe ed. (N. Y.: Macmillan, 1901), pp. 427, 429, 430.

3. See W. Osler, *Science and Immortality* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1904), p. 20.

4. A. Schweitzer, *Verfall und Wiederaufbau der Kultur* (I); *Kultur und Ethik* (II), (Bern: Haupt, 1923). Both volumes have been translated into English.

5. *Op. cit.* (I), p. 53.

6. *Werke* (Reclam), iv, 348.

7. *Sonnenklares Bericht*, in *Werke* (Berlin: Veit, 1845), ii, 333.

8. F. Thilly, *History of Philosophy* (N. Y.: Holt, 1914), p. 479.

9. See J. Royce, *Lectures on Modern Idealism* (N. H.: Yale University Press, 1919), p. 225.

10. *Philosophy of History*, tr. J. Sibree (N. Y.: Collier, 1905).

11. A. Weber, *History of Philosophy*, tr. F. Thilly (N. Y.: Scribner, 1904), p. 534.

12. See the discussion of method in Chapter I of E. S. Brightman, *An Introduction to Philosophy* (N. Y.: Holt, 1925).

13. In E. B. Holt and others, *The New Realism* (N. Y.: Macmillan, 1912), p. 241.

14. Miss M. P. Follett, *Creative Experience* (N. Y.: Longmans, 1924), is an excellent illustration.

15. Schelling, *Von der Weltseele. Eine Hypothese der höhern Physik zur Erklärung des allgemeinen Organismus* (Hamburg: Perthes, 1798).

16. *Anweisung zum seligen Leben. Werke*, v, 104.

17. *The World as Will and Idea* (Eng. tr.), i, 43.

18. *Kleinere philosophische Schriften*, iii, 729, 722.

19. *Sonnenklarer Bericht . . . Ein Versuch, die Leser zum Verstehen zu zwingen.* In *Werke*, ii, 323.

20. Herbart, *Hauptpuncte der Metaphysik* (Göttingen: Danckwerts, 1808), p. 103.

21. Überweg, *Grundriss der Geschichte der Philosophie* (Berlin: Mittler, 1923), iv, 174.

22. *Ibid.* 4.

23. *Anweisung zum seligen Leben. Werke*, v, 466.

24. *Ibid.*, 469.

25. *Philosophy of Religion* (Eng. tr.), ii, 63.

26. Part III of *Encyclopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften* (tr. by Wallace as *Hegel's Philosophy of Spirit*).

27. *Werke*, v, 211, etc. *Vocation of Man* (Chicago: Open Court Publishing Co., 1910), pp. 131, 132, 141, etc.

28. Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Idea* (tr. Haldane and Kemp, London: Paul, 1906), i, 402, 255, 266, 494, 167, 503, 504, 507.

29. *Ibid.*, i, 199; ii, 453.

30. Schopenhauer, *Werke* (Reclam), v, 696.

31. On the general problem, see Jesse Winecoff Ball, *Absolute Idealism and Immortality* (Ph.D. thesis, University of Nebraska, June, 1907).

32. Schelling's earlier writings; Hegel's *Phänomenologie.*

33. See A. Schweitzer, *op. cit.* (n. 4 above), (II), p. 123.

34. See H. C. P. Beckers, "Die Unsterblichkeitslehre Schellings . . ." in *König.-bay. Abhandlungen der Akademie der Wissenschaften, München.* Philos.-philol. Classe, xi. (München, 1862), 3–112, esp. 66, 96, 100, 101. The relevant passages from Schelling have been faithfully collated, but the value of the monograph is limited by the simple faith of the author that Schelling's thought, from its earliest to its latest phase, was "a steady progress" (p. 3).

35. Cited in Überweg, *Grundriss*, iv, 97.

36. See Otto's edition of the *Reden* (Göttingen: Vandenhoek und Ruprecht, 1920), pp. 82, 83. Also *Der Christliche Glaube*, 4th ed. (Berlin: Reimer, 1843), pp. 487–502. Cf. also, A. S. Pringle-Pattison, *The Idea of Immortality* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1922), pp. 136, 164, 165, and R. A. Tsanoff, *The Problem of Immortality* (N. Y.: Macmillan, 1924), p. 233.

37. C. C. Everett, *Fichte's Science of Knowledge* (Chicago: Griggs, 1884), p. 8.

38. *Werke*, i, 269–270. Also Everett, *op. cit.*, p. 151.

39. *The Vocation of Man*, tr. W. Smith (Chi-

cago: Open Court Publishing Co., 1910), pp. 113, 114, 141, 115.

40. E. Bergman, *J. G. Fichte über Gott und Unsterblichkeit. Aus einem Kollegheft von 1795* (Berlin: Reuther und Reichard, 1914). *Kant-studien*, Ergänzungsheft, No. 33, pp. 28, 30, 31.

41. *The Vocation of Man*, p. 153.

42. *Anweisung zum seligen Leben. Werke*, v, 518, 475, 530. Cf. 409. It is true that one may find an occasional uncomplimentary reference to personality in Fichte, as in the following passage from *The Nature of the Scholar* (tr. W. Smith, London: Chapman, 1848). The man devoted to the Idea, says Fichte, forgets himself. "His person, — all personality, — has disappeared in the Divine Idea of universal order. That order is his ever-present thought; only through it does he conceive of individual men; hence, neither friend nor foe, neither favourite nor adversary, finds a place before him; but all alike, and he himself with them, are lost forever in the thought of the independence and equality of all" (*op. cit.*, p. 105). That this passage, and similar ones, do not admit of the interpretation put on them by those who think that Fichte denies personal immortality and holds to absorption into the Absolute is evident from two considerations. The first is that the passage describes an experience of a human being in this life; and the second is that he is not speaking of the destruction of personality as consciousness, but only of annihilation of an undue respect for one's own person (or for particular others), which is based on

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"the independence and equality" (and therefore the personal distinctness) of all.

43. *Cf. The Vocation of Man*, p. 147.

44. An unpublished paper by the Reverend Albion R. King on "Immortality in the Thought of Hegel" (written for the Seminar on Hegel in Boston University, 1923–24) has collected data to which the text is indebted at several points.

45. So, E. Petavel, *The Problem of Immortality* (1892), pp. 50–54; A. Seth, *Hegelianism and Personality* (1887), pp. 235–238; Baron F. von Hügel, *Eternal Life* (1912), p. 206; R. Mackintosh, *Hegel and Hegelianism* (1903), p. 121; W. Windelband, *History of Philosophy* (tr. 1893), p. 640; W. T. Stace, *The Philosophy of Hegel* (1924), p. 514.

46. In Sir James Marchant (editor), *Immortality* (N. Y.: Putnam, 1924), p. 129.

47. J. M. E. M'Taggart, *Studies in Hegelian Cosmology*, 2d ed. (Cambridge University Press, 1918), pp. 4–55; W. Windelband, *History of Philosophy* (N. Y.: Macmillan, 1893 and later edd.), p. 640.

48. Hegel, *Werke*, xvii, 633–634.

49. So the St. Louis School (see the *Journal of Speculative Philosophy*, *passim*); J. M. Sterrett, *Studies in Hegel's Philosophy of Religion* (1890), p. 208; also T. H. Green, and the Cairds; cf. also, Royce and Miss Calkins.

50. *Philosophy of Religion* (tr.), i, 315, 79, 80; iii, 58; ii, 213, 103; iii, 205; cf. also, iii, 57, 302, 303.

51. *Op. cit.*, ii, 260.

52. Schopenhauer, *Werke* (Reclam), iv, 219.

53. *The World as Will and Idea* (tr.), iii, 285, 286, 308.

54. "A Dialogue on Immortality," tr. by C. L. Bernays in *Jour. Spec. Phil.*, i (1867), 61, 62.

55. *The World as Will and Idea*, iii, 279, 281, 282.

56. *Op. cit.*, iii, 427, 431; i, 506.

57. *Op. cit.*, i, 170, 171, 203; cf. also, 206, 207, 290, 291.

58. F. Brunstäd, *Die Idee der Religion* (Halle: Niemeyer, 1922), p. 303.

59. Fichte, "A Criticism of Philosophical System," tr. A. E. Kroeger, in *Jour. Spec. Phil.*, i (1867), 53.

60. *The World as Will and Idea* (Eng. tr.), i, 157.

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